

A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

The term American Exceptionalism is used to designate political myths purporting the qualitative distinction of the United States to other nations. I argue that American Exceptionalism should not be viewed as a single political myth but as a metamyth constituted by four logically independent myths of American Exceptionalism. These myths center around the notion that America has a unique spiritual condition; that America is uniquely developed, structured and/or capable; that America has a unique or superior moral quality; and that America ought to behave as a moral example to other nations. I refer to these as American Spiritual Exceptionalism, American Performative Exceptionalism, American Moral Exceptionalism, and American Moral Exemplarism respectively. I also posit that there is a non-mythical belief in the uniqueness or superiority in America's performance or moral quality. I call this view American Existential Exceptionalism. To determine if there is evidence that these notions of American Exceptionalism are believed in isolation to each other I conducted a correlation test based on a 29-item survey questionnaire meant to gauge belief in these five notions. Further, I hypothesized that a four-factor model is a better fit for the notion of American Exceptionalism than a single-factor model. To test this, I conducted two Confirmatory Factor Analyses and compared their results. The results suggested that the four-factor model is a better fit than the one-factor model. However, the results also suggested that there is a better model than the four-factor model suggested by this paper.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my heavenly father, my savior Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit and request their help in converting the knowledge gained by it into wisdom.

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I would like to thank my advisor, Kirby Goidel, for his guidance and patience in this process. I would like to thank Johanna Dunaway and Linda Radzik for serving on my committee. I would like to thank my husband, Bryce Wargin, for all of his statistical tutelage.

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NOMENCLATURE

AE	American Exceptionalism
ASE	American Spiritual Exceptionalism
APE	American Performative Exceptionalism
AME	American Moral Exceptionalism
AMX	American Moral Exemplarism
AEE	American Existential Exceptionalism
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit index
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
MTurk	Amazon Mechanical Turk

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1. INTRODUCTION*

In 2013 Russian President Vladimir Putin wrote a New York Times Op-Ed reprimanding then U.S. President Barack Obama for “encourag[ing the American] people to see themselves as exceptional” – a practice Putin called “extremely dangerous” (Putin, 2013). This response was prompted by President Obama’s reference to the political myth commonly called American Exceptionalism to justify the use of military force in Syria (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-a). The myth of American Exceptionalism posits that the United States is qualitatively distinct and even superior to other nations. Scholarship on this myth is important for many reasons (Gilmore, J. & Rowling C.M., 2017; Gilmore, J., Sheets, P. & Rowling, C., 2016; Gilmore, J., 2015) including its prevalence in international discourse (Gilmore J. & Rowling, C.M., 2018; Gilmore, J., 2014). A large body of research has been amassed assessing the socio-historical attributes of the notion of American Exceptionalism while little attention has been paid to the fundamental structure of this political myth. As a result, what scholars typically refer to as a single myth of American Exceptionalism is more accurately understood as a metamythic construct with four logically independent exceptionalism myths constituting it. I will refer to these constituting myths as American Spiritual Exceptionalism, American Performative Exceptionalism, American Moral Exceptionalism, and American Moral Exemplarism. I also posit that there is a non-mythic belief in America’s qualitative distinction from other

* Portions of this section will be forthcoming in *Philosophy and Public Issues* Vol. 8, no. 3, 2019.

nations; I refer to this view as American Existential Exceptionalism. In this research I administered a survey. From this I constructed five scales meant to measure these concepts. I then conducted two confirmatory factor analyses: A confirmatory factor analysis that posited a single latent variable as explaining all 24 “mythic” items of my scale and a confirmatory factor analysis that posited four latent variables as explaining the 24 mythic items. I then conducted a likelihood ratio test to determine which factor analyses had more explanatory power.

This paper contributes to American Exceptionalism scholarship in at least three ways. First, this research helps develop a scale for measuring belief in American Exceptionalism. While a variety of ideological surveys have attempted to measure certain aspects of belief in American Exceptionalism, these surveys typically put forward a single question that measures only one form of American Exceptionalism. This research will aid in constructing a multi-item scale that can be used to measure belief in American Exceptionalism more fully.

Second, this paper enriches the definitional content of research on American Exceptionalism. While scholars have functional and consistent definitions of the notion of American Exceptionalism, said definitions are often so broad and vague that they capture all dimensions of the American Exceptionalism myth without properly noting that these various aspects are not necessarily believed together. In this paper I present six concise definitions to encompass the richness of the notion of American Exceptionalism.

Finally, this paper clarifies current and future discussions of American Exceptionalism. Primarily, this paper clarifies and, indeed, deepens much of the

conflictual conversation surrounding the terminology of “American Exceptionalism”. While political elites often contest the notion of American Exceptionalism, it will be shown through this research that they are seldom assuming the same kind of exceptionalism. Similarly, this paper gives scholars further clarity on what will become of the myth of American Exceptionalism in the future. It will be shown that religious belief is not necessary for belief in all forms of American Exceptionalism. As such, though the American polity is arguably becoming increasingly secular, it is not necessarily coming closer to losing belief in American Exceptionalism

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Current Attempts to Define American Exceptionalism

It was stated above that definitions of American Exceptionalism, while consistent, suffer from imprecision. This may be due to definitions that are too narrow and focus on all the elements of American Exceptionalism or a single dimension of American Exceptionalism. For example, Deborah L. Madsen presents American Exceptionalism as the belief that:

America and Americans are special, exceptional, because they are charged with saving the world from itself and, at the same time, America and Americans must sustain a high level of spiritual, political and moral commitment to this exceptional destiny—America must be as 'a city upon a hill' exposed to the eyes of the world (1998, p. 2).

This is a tidy definition in that it captures all elements of American Exceptionalism and provides a theory of internal logic for the myth. But the notion of American Exceptionalism is not always presented as a story incorporating America’s spiritual

condition, performative condition, moral condition and exemplary duty; often only one or two of these are expressed.

Gilles Vandivinit recognizes this but moves to the opposite extreme in developing a definition of American Exceptionalism. He argues that “different cultural backgrounds have contrasting ideas of what America as a nation means...which is why it is so difficult to establish one single definition that encapsulates...American Exceptionalism. The one unequivocal element seems to be the fact that America as a nation is indeed an exceptional country” (2014, p. 166, emphasis mine). This definition is correct, but a more precise definition is to be desired if it is to be had.

Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling define American Exceptionalism as the “belief that the United States is a singular, superior, and even God-favored country in the international community” (2017, p. 139). This definition is superior to those discussed above in that it suggests distinctions in how American Exceptionalism is expressed, one of which being America’s supposed spiritual uniqueness. However, this definition is imprecise in the ways the United States is viewed as singular or superior. A preferable definition would include the notions of moral superiority and/or singularity as well as performative singularity and/or superiority.* I suggest a new definition for American Exceptionalism below. Before this is attempted however, it is important to see how these notions of American Exceptionalism have been presented rhetorically.

* Distinct from all of these definitions is McCloskey and Zaller’s conception of American Exceptionalism as a set of competing values (The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy, 1984).

1.1.2. Examples of American Exceptionalism in Political Rhetoric

In this section I discuss rhetorical examples of the United States being posited as favored by God as well as examples in which the United States has been posited as singular or superior in terms of their performance or morality. I further show that while some exceptionalism rhetoric posits the moral superiority of the United States over other nations, there is also a long-standing tradition of viewing America not as merely being morally superior to the rest of the world, but as having an *obligation* to be morally superior to the rest of the world.

The earliest forms of the myth of American Exceptionalism were religiously based. Historian Mark Noll states that by the time notions of a revolution against Great Britain began to surface in the Americas, “New England preachers had long stressed the special relationship between God and that region” (1992, p. 119). In a mythic tale echoing the Israelite exodus from Egypt, Americans were viewed as “an especially chosen people” (Diez-Bosch & Franch, 2017, p. 2), set apart by God with a “specific world mission to spread democracy and liberty” (Blume & Johnson, 2013, p. 2128). This religious aspect of the myth continues to be evoked in political rhetoric today, though perhaps the most eloquent spokesman in recent memory for America’s exceptional spiritual quality was President Ronald Reagan. In one rich example of this, Reagan stated that “[s]ince her beginning America has held fast to this hope of divine providence, this vision of “man with God” (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-b). In his 1981 national day of prayer declaration, Ronald Reagan stated the following about America:

Our Nation's motto "In God We Trust" — was not chosen lightly. It reflects a basic recognition that there is a divine authority in the universe to which this

Nation owes homage. Throughout our history Americans have put their faith in God and no one can doubt that we have been blessed for it. The earliest settlers of this land came in search of religious freedom. Landing on a desolate shoreline, they established a spiritual foundation that has served us ever since (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-c).

In his 1982 national day of prayer declaration, Ronald Reagan stated that Americans “share a special sense of destiny as a nation dedicated under God to the cause of liberty for all men” (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-d).

The theological contributions to the notion of American Exceptionalism are considerable (Wilsey, 2015; Vandivinit, 2014; Litke, 2012). However, the myth of American Exceptionalism is more than the notion of the United States as a chosen people, especially used or beloved by God. The myth also contains elements of Americans as especially virtuous and American ideals as superior to the ideals of other nations. For example, President Theodore Roosevelt intimately connected “moral character” with being a genuine American – irrespective of place of birth (Dorsey, 2007, p. 26). This tradition appears to carry on today. Ivie and Giner argue that “Americans habitually imagine themselves as a morally elevated people set apart from the rest of the world” (2008, p. 361). Presidents George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George H. W. Bush all invoked notions of American moral exceptionalism in times of international humanitarian crisis (Motter, 2010). President Obama similarly appealed to America’s moral character to garner support for an intervention in Syria – eliciting the condemnatory response from Vladimir Putin discussed above.

Myths of American moral exceptionalism has historically been intimately tied with myths about American spiritual exceptionalism. Ronald Reagan made this tie in his 1980

speech discussed above, interpreting John Winthrop as a man expecting to live as a moral example to the rest of the world: “The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God...we shall be made a story and a byword through the world” (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-b). Justin Litke (2012) discusses at length this aspect of John Winthrop’s view of the mission of the Massachusetts Bay settlers and his findings are elucidating to the discussion of American Exceptionalism. Litke draws out two important distinctions between how the myth of American Exceptionalism has been understood. Arguably the most prominent and most defamatory is an *imperialistic* interpretation of American Exceptionalism. Under this interpretation the United States has a responsibility to bring other nations into proper moral order through direct intervention. This proper moral order may be interpreted as a change of the structure of the government in question to be more democratic or more egalitarian in its policies. Whatever the moral impropriety may be, this view posits that America has a responsibility, or at least a justification, to use direct means of bring about the desired change.

A less aggressive interpretation of American Exceptionalism is America as moral exemplar. Litke argues that it was in the spirit of exemplification that John Winthrop infamously called the settlers of the new world a shining city on a hill. According to Litke, Winthrop believed the work of “the colonists’ [of Massachusetts Bay was]...to set an example that the rest of the world ought to follow” (Litke, 2012, p. 202). There is an

unmistakable note of exceptionalism in Winthrop's rhetoric here[†]: the Massachusetts Bay colonists were on a mission to be a "light to the world...to show the world, in the flesh, the perfect Christian commonwealth" (Litke, 2012, p. 212). But, unlike imperialistic rhetoric, this was a mission fulfilled by example to the rest of the world and not by forceful intervention.

We have thus far seen three ways in which the United States, or the New World which would become the United States, has been viewed as exceptional. One is a spiritual connection to God; another is moral superiority. Third, we have seen the view that the United States ought to be a moral example to the rest of the world – a beacon of virtue that can be seen by others and emulated by them. In addition to these, American Exceptionalism is often the mythical depiction of the United States as an awe-inspiring force within the world's assemblage of governments. This has been posited through the historical uniqueness of the United States (Tyrell, 1991), such as when Hillary Clinton defended the notion of American Exceptionalism by asserting that "[w]e are the longest surviving democracy" (CBS Sunday Morning, 2014). Performance myths of this type often tout the exceptional nature of America's governmental structure, Constitution or American military power (Szpunar, 2013).

[†] See (Hodgson, 2009) for a critique of using Winthrop to develop notions of American Exceptionalism. In particular, Hodgson notes that "Winthrop was not an American" (2009, p. 2). Litke also acknowledges this point (2012, p. 204).

Thus, we can see there are four types of American Exceptionalism myths.[‡] There are religious-based myths that are premised on the connection of America to God. There are performative- or prowess-based myths that are premised on the abilities or accomplishments of the United States. Finally, there are two types of moral-based myths. Moral-based myths of the first sort are premised on the moral nature of Americans or of the superior quality of American values; they present themselves as descriptive. Alternatively, there are moral-based myths that present themselves as prescriptive: they are myths cloaked in language of how America ought to be; they are a forward looking ideal for which Americans ought to strive rather than a present state already or necessarily attained. In the next section I develop definitions for each of these notions, as well as for the overarching notion of American Exceptionalism. But first it is important to discuss why recognizing these distinctions is important.

1.2. Why this Research Matters

These distinctions are important for American Exceptionalism scholarship in two ways. First, they illuminate how Americans are currently interacting with myths of American Exceptionalism. That is to say, the term “American Exceptionalism” encompasses several substantive concepts and miscommunication and confusion

[‡] I do not argue here that this list is logically exhaustive or representative of every form of American Exceptionalism that has been posited. My reasons for avoiding the former claim is that delving into an exploration of whether there is logical space for other forms of American Exceptionalism would be difficult and impractical as it would ultimately distract from the larger and more important points of this paper. My reasons for avoiding the latter claim is that, as I have not heard nor read every discussion of American Exceptionalism and as I cannot deny the possibility of logical space for other forms of American Exceptionalism, I cannot say with certainty that these are the only forms that have been discussed. These are merely the only forms of American Exceptionalism that I have encountered in political rhetoric and American Exceptionalism scholarship.

concerning the notion is prevalent because of this. As recently as 2016 the platform put forward by the Republican party opened with “We believe in American Exceptionalism,” which it goes on to define as the belief that the “United States of America is unlike any other nation on earth...exceptional because of our historic role — first as refuge, then as defender, and now as exemplar of liberty for the world to see” (Republican National Convention, 2016). In 2011, Pew Research Center found that half of Republicans were willing to say the United States stands above all other countries, whereas only one-third of Democrats and Independents believed this (Heimlich, 2011). A more recent survey showed similar discrepancies between Republicans and Democrats, though the variance was not as pronounced (Tyson, 2014). But there are indications that these affiliations are changing.

The most recent Republican president has distanced himself from the notion of American Exceptionalism, stating that he “didn’t like the term” and indicating that the notion of American Exceptionalism is insulting to other nations and descriptively incorrect as “...Germany is eating our lunch” (Mother Jones, 2016). During the 2016 presidential campaign, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton responded to these comments in an address to the American Legion:

Donald Trump has said very clearly that he thinks ‘American Exceptionalism’ is insulting to the rest of the world. In fact, when Vladimir Putin – of all people – criticized American Exceptionalism, my opponent agreed with him, saying, I quote: “If you’re in Russia, you don’t want to hear that America is exceptional.” Well maybe you don’t want to hear it, but that doesn’t mean it is not true. My opponent misses something important. When we say America is exceptional, it doesn’t mean that people from other places don’t feel deep national pride, just like we do. It means that we recognize America’s unique and unparalleled ability to be a

force for peace and progress, a champion for freedom and opportunity (Hains, 2016).

This exchange represented a surprising reversal in political party affiliation and belief in American Exceptionalism. Further, other liberally inclined political elites have reacted similarly to Trump’s denouncement of American Exceptionalism.[§] Jake Sullivan, former advisor for Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden, argued recently for the development of “a new American exceptionalism as the answer to Donald Trump’s “America first”” (2019). Similarly, Ronald Klain, former White House advisor to Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, argued recently that the Democratic Party ought to become the party of American Exceptionalism. In praise of the vision of American Exceptionalism set forward by Barack Obama, Klain writes that:

[I]n one of the least-appreciated intellectual dimensions of his presidency, Obama redefined the exceptionalist idea during his second term and set forth a new vision of exceptionalism based — not on America’s founding or divine designation — but on the extraordinary acts that Americans perform to help others in need, not just in the United States, but throughout the world (Klain, 2017).

Klain here particularly refers to Barack Obama’s use of American Exceptionalism terminology to justify intervening in Syria, stating, “...when, with modest effort and risk, we can stop children from being gassed to death, and thereby make our own children safer over the long run, I believe we should act.” President Obama went on to state that “[t]hat’s what makes America different. That’s what makes us exceptional (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-

[§] Cf. (Beinart, 2018); (Levitz, 2019).

a)". America is unique because we act not only for our own good, but also for the good of others.

However, Klain is misguided in believing this interpretation of American Exceptionalism is original to President Obama. The most recent president besides Barack Obama to invoke this form of American Exceptionalism was his immediate predecessor. On January 1, 2005, only days after Indonesia was devastated by a massive tsunami, President George W. Bush stated, "Americans are a compassionate people" and praised those who "on their own initiative, are raising millions of dollars for relief efforts" (Peters & Wooley, n.d.-e). Bush went on to say that "these Americans...represent the best of our country and offer an example to the world" (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-e).

Though many of these political elites are using the term American Exceptionalism, they are not necessarily assuming the same types of exceptionalism. Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton are discussing America's (un)exceptionalism in terms of performance, though Clinton includes notions of moral exceptionalism. Klain, however, is only touting Barack Obama's version of American Exceptionalism that is based on America's moral character. Furthermore, President Obama is arguably presenting a view of America as moral exemplar. Notably, none of these elites invoked notions of American Spiritual Exceptionalism such as we saw professed by Ronald Reagan.

It can be seen from this that recognizing these distinct forms of American Exceptionalism clarifies current political conversations and disagreements within American society over the notion of American Exceptionalism. Where Donald Trump appears to reject American Exceptionalism due to current economic inferiority, Hillary

Clinton defends it due to the interplay of political, military and moral competence. Alternatively, President Obama defends moral exceptionalism not as a fact, but as a goal. This is the first reason understanding these distinctions is important: drawing them out clarifies discussions on the notion of American Exceptionalism.

The second reason understanding these distinctions is important is because of the connection between religiosity and belief in American Exceptionalism. As the American polity becomes less religious (Pew Research Center, 2015; Cf. Lipka, 2015) it is probable that it will be less inclined to believe myths premised on a divine being or power. Without properly appreciating the various forms of American Exceptionalism, it might mistakenly be assumed that all forms of these myths will disappear as America becomes more secularized.

2. DEFINING AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM*

In their work on myths and the Bill of Rights Kirby Goidel, Craig Freeman, and Brian Smentkowski introduce the concept of a metamyth as an “overarching construct” (2015. p. 71) constituted by related myths. An example of this for Goidel et al. is the metamyth of America as a Christian nation. They posit that various social and political myths of the United States are drawn from a more fundamental myth that the United States is a Christian nation. These myths include beliefs that the American founders were particularly devout and used by God as well as aspects of American Exceptionalism myths (Goidel, Freeman & Smentkowski, 2015, p. 72).

As I understand Goidel et al., America possesses a *category* of myths that are drawn from the notion that America is a Christian nation. These myths are logically independent from each other but related in that they are all premised on America as a Christian nation. For example, the godly devotion of the American founding fathers is not entailed by, nor does it entail, a belief in America as wholly set apart by God. Yet both constitute a metamyth that America is a Christian nation. In the same way, American Exceptionalism ought to be understood as a metamyth. By this I mean to say that America possesses a category of political myths that assume some kind of exceptionalism about the United States. American Exceptionalism is the overarching construct that joins these myths together, but the individual myths themselves are logically independent of each

* Portions of this section will be forthcoming in *Philosophy and Public Issues* Vol. 8, no. 3, 2019.

other. The category of myths which fit within the construct of American Exceptionalism can be classified into four subcategories of myths. Specifically, there are myths about the exceptional spiritual condition of the United States of America; myths about the exceptional capabilities or accomplishments of the United States of America – what I see as *performance*-based myths; and myths about the exceptional moral condition of the United States of America, either as a nation that is morally superior to other nations or as a nation that *ought to be* morally superior to other nations as a means of example and instruction to them.

It should be noted that there is a way of understanding the notion of American exceptionalism that is not mythical. By this, I mean the view that America or Americans are as a matter of fact distinct in the world (Murray, 2013). We can think of this as a kind of Existential Exceptionalism.

I will make an argument for the logical independence of each of these myths below, but first it will be helpful to have precise definitions of these concepts. I suggest the following definitions for the category of exceptional myths and each of the subcategories within it:

American Exceptionalism (AE): A metamyth purporting that the United States is comparatively unique in the international community or comparatively superior in the international community or favored by God or a higher power, composed of myths of American Performative Exceptionalism, American Spiritual Exceptionalism, American Moral Exceptionalism, and American Moral Exemplarism.

American Performative Exceptionalism (APE): A facet of the metamyth American Exceptionalism purporting that the United States polity is qualitatively distinct and/or superior to other nations, particularly in terms of its history, governmental structure and institutions, military power and the foreign influence attained by these.

American Spiritual Exceptionalism (ASE): A facet of the metamyth of American Exceptionalism purporting that the United States polity is uniquely connected to God or a higher power.

American Moral Exceptionalism (AME): A facet of the metamyth of American Exceptionalism purporting that the American people are superior in their moral attributes or character or have a distinct and superior set of moral values.

American Moral Exemplarism (AMX): A variant of the myth of American Moral Exceptionalism and purporting that America ought to be a moral example to the rest of the world.

Finally, I proposed the following definition for the non-mythical view that America is exceptional in its performance or moral quality:

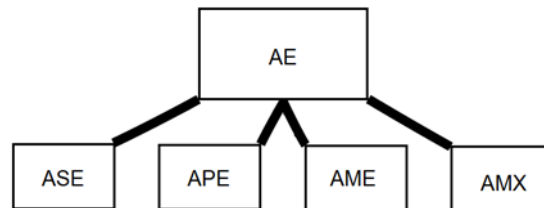
American Existential Exceptionalism (AEE): A non-mythic belief that the United States is distinct from other countries in either values, economic or military power, governmental structure or historical occurrence.

Above I asserted that each facet of the American Exceptionalism metamyth is logically independent from the other forms. By this I mean to say that APE does not entail ASE or AME or AMX; ASE does not entail APE or AME or AMX; AME does not entail APE or ASE or AMX; AMX does not entail APE or ASE or AME. It follows from this that any form of the American Exceptionalism metamyth can be believed to the exclusion of any other form. In other words, it is logically possible to believe, say, AMX without believing APE. This is not to say that one form of the American Exceptionalism metamyth cannot be posited as being *causally related* to another form; it merely means that the concepts themselves are logically independent of each other. For example, When Hillary Clinton states that America is great because America is good (PBS NewsHour, 2016) she posits moral exceptionalism (“good”) as being causally related to performative

exceptionalism (“great”). Nevertheless, the concept of a country being good is logically independent of the concept of a country being great. In other words, it is possible for me to believe that America is performatively great, but morally bad.

Figure 2.1 below represented depicts the relationship I am suggesting between these concepts. The large rectangle represents the construct of American Exceptionalism (AE). It can be seen that AE consists of four exceptionalism myths: ASE, APE, AME, and AMX.

Figure 2. 1: Illustration of American Exceptionalism



It is worth considering for a moment why scholars have thus far failed to appreciate this element of American Exceptionalism rhetoric. It may be a result of these myths generally being presented as causally related. For example, ASE myths may be invoked simultaneously with notions of APE, such as when America’s superiority in the world is attributed to God’s help or design (Gilmore, 2015, p. 304; Gabriel, 1974, p. 13). Similarly, spiritual exceptionalism claims may be made in connection with moral exceptionalism or exemplarism claims or moral exemplarism claims may be made in connection with performative exceptionalism claims. For example, political elites may argue that America is or ought to be morally superior to other nations because America is favored by God. Or it may be argued that because of America’s superior power, America has an obligation to behave in a morally superior manner to the rest of the world.

Nonetheless, these ideas are logically independent and a belief in one form of American Exceptionalism does not necessarily entail a belief in another form of American Exceptionalism.

In this study I attempted to answer the following research question and test the following hypothesis concerning American Exceptionalism:

RQ1: Is there evidence that the various forms of American Exceptionalism I have identified are believed in isolation with each other?

H1: A four-factor model, consisting of the latent variables American Spiritual Exceptionalism, American Performative Exceptionalism, American Moral Exceptionalism, and American Moral Exemplarism, is a better model fit for explaining the concept of American Exceptionalism than a single factor model.

3. METHODS

3.1. Sample

To test the research hypothesis, I administered a 54-item questionnaire to 308 individuals. I administered my questionnaire through Amazon Mechanical Turk, an online crowdsourcing network. I constructed the survey using Google Forms and distributed it through an online link. Respondents received a low sum of monetary compensation for completing the questionnaire.

I administered the survey twice. The first survey was administered on July 17, 2018 and received 205 respondents. One respondent was deleted due to the respondent having inconsistent responses, indicating they did not properly read the questions. My second survey was administered on August 28, 2018 and received 106 respondents. Three of these were deleted due to having previously taken the questionnaire, making the final number of my respondents 308. The survey was restricted to individuals over 18 years old residing in the United States. Fourteen respondents failed to answer all questions. There was no pattern to the non-responses, so I removed them from the sample.

3.2. Instrument

The questionnaire was constituted by three sections. In the first section I gathered demographic information (such as age, race, religious orientation, education and time spent traveling or living outside of the United States) as well as various common socio-political survey questions such as whether the respondent believed the country was on the right track, whether they were registered to vote and whom they had voted for in the 2016

presidential election. The second section was comprised of the ten item Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith questionnaire (Plante & Boccaccini, 1997).

The final section of the questionnaire posed 24 questions designed to gauge belief in the four forms of the American Exceptionalism myth as well as 5 questions designed to gauge belief in American Existential Exceptionalism. These questions were measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). American Spiritual Exceptionalism was measured using 8 items. Three of these items were taken from previous surveys. These were as follows. One item from this block was taken from a Gilmore and Rowling (2017, p. 144) study: “In the eyes of God, the United States is the same as all other countries;” one was taken from a PPRI study: “God has granted America a special role in human history;” (Jones & Cox, 2015) and one was taken from a study by Whitehead, Perry and Baker (2018, p.12): “The success of the United States is part of God’s plan.” The remaining five items I developed and included items such as “God has a close relationship with the United States” and “The American Founders were led by God.”

Five questions were meant to measure belief in American Performative Exceptionalism. These questions included one from the Gilmore and Rowling (2017, p. 144) study: “The United States is the most important country in the world”; the remaining questions were constructed by me; these included questions such as “The United States constitution is the best in the world” and “The United States is not a capable world leader” (reverse coded).

Six questions were meant to measure belief in American Moral Exceptionalism and five were meant to gauge belief in American Moral Exemplarism. I used one item

from the Gilmore and Rowling (2017, p. 144) study: “America has a unique set of values that sets it apart from the world” to gauge belief in American Moral Exceptionalism. The remaining items in each category I constructed. Examples of items used to gauge belief in American Moral Exceptionalism included: “Americans are more compassionate than people in other countries” and “Americans have a stronger sense of morality than most other nations.” Examples of items used to gauge belief in American Moral Exemplarism include: “America ought to be a moral example to other nations” and “There are several countries in the world whose values America ought to emulate” (reverse coded).

Finally, five items were meant to measure non-mythical beliefs in American Exceptionalism. An example of these included the following: “The United States has a unique history compared to the rest of the world, but not in a way that makes it better than any other place in the world” and “The culture of the United States is unique compared to the rest of the world, but not in a way that makes it better or worse.”

3.3. Data Analysis

I investigated my research question in two steps. To determine whether I had reliable scale variables, I conducted Cronbach’s alpha on the items designed to measure belief in American Spiritual Exceptionalism (ASE), American Moral Exceptionalism (AME), American Performative Exceptionalism (APE), American Moral Exemplarism (AMX), and American Existential Exceptionalism (AEE). To determine if these constructs were believed in isolation to each other, I created five new variables by combining each of the items designed to measure ASE, AME, APE, AMX, and AEE. I then calculated the correlation of these scales with each other.

To test my hypothesis, I conducted two Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) and compared the fit of each model. Confirmatory Factor Analysis is a statistical method used to assess the explanatory power of a latent or unobserved variable over observed variables. My first CFA (CFA 1) posited a single latent variable as explaining the 24 items in my American Exceptionalism scale (the items relating to ASE, APE, AME, and AMX). This scale represents definitions of American Exceptionalism as a single, homogenous myth – “Americans are special, exceptional, because they are charged with saving the world from itself and, at the same time...must sustain a high level of spiritual, political and moral commitment to this exceptional destiny” (Madsen, 1998, p.2). My second CFA (CFA 2) posited four latent variables as explaining the same 24 items . These four variables were American Spiritual Exceptionalism, American Performative Exceptionalism, American Moral Exceptionalism, and American Moral Exemplarism.

I used Comparative Fit Indices (CFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) to determine the goodness of fit of each model as well as conducting a likelihood ratio test to determine which CFA explained the data more effectively. A likelihood ratio test can be used to determine if a model with more parameters has greater explanatory power than its simpler counterpart. I conducted a likelihood ratio test to determine if my hypothesized model with four latent variables had more explanatory power than the traditional model positing a single American Exceptionalism construct.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

As with figures, tables can be inserted in the middle of regular text. Please don't split tables unless they are too large to fit on one page. If a table can't fit on one page, then split it, but repeat the column headings and add the caption "Table X.X Continued" on the second page.

My sample tended to be young: the mean age of respondents was 38 and the mode age was 28. The youngest person to respond to the survey was 19 and the oldest respondent was 71. The sample was overwhelmingly white, well-educated, well-traveled, liberal and non-religious. Males responded to my survey at a slightly higher rate than females. Approximately 77% of respondents were white; approximately 72% of respondents had taken undergraduate courses and almost 17% had received a graduate degree. Less than 10% had only their High School Diploma or equivalent. Over 65% had traveled or lived outside of the United States at some point in their life. Approximately 44% of respondents identified as either strongly liberal or moderately liberal with only 24% identifying as strongly or moderately conservative. Over 41% identified as either atheist, agnostic or non-religious; approximately 43% identified as either Catholic, mainline protestant, or evangelical/born again. Table 4.1 summarizes these findings. These results, though disproportionate of the American populace, are similar to previous studies conducted using Amazon Mechanical Turk (Levay, Freese & Druckman, 2016; Huff & Tingley, 2015; Lewis, Djupé, Mockabee & Su-Ya Wu, 2015).

Table 4. 1: Descriptive Statistics

AGE	Obs.:	306	RELIGION	Agnostic	14.81%
	Range:	19 years old to 71 years old		Atheist	10.44%
	Mean:	38 years old		Catholic	22.56%
	Mode:	28 years old		Mainline Protestant	11.11%
RACE/ GENDER		Male	53%	Evangelical/ “Born Again”	9.76%
		White/Caucasian	77.27%	Other Christian	5.72%
		Hispanic/Latino/na	7.47%	Religious, Non-Christian	7.07%
		Black/African American	6.49%	Non-Religious	16.16%
		Other	8.75%	Don’t Know	2.36%
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		Strongly Liberal	22.40%	Had lived or traveled outside the US	66.34%
		Moderately Liberal	21.43%	Had spent less than 1 week outside the US	18.14%
		Moderate	32.14%	Had spent a couple of weeks outside the US	21.57%
		Moderately Conservative	16.56%	Had spent about a month outside the US	18.63%
		Strongly Conservative	7.47%	Had spent a couple of months outside the US	8.33%
EDUCATION		Less than High School/equivalent	1.30%	Had spent between 2 and 6 months outside the US	10.29%
		High School/equivalent	9.42%	Had spent about 6 months outside the US	4.41%
		Some College	30.52%	Had spent between 6 months and a year outside the US	2.45%
		Undergraduate Degree	41.88%	Had spent about a year outside the US	4.90%
		Graduate Degree	16.88%	Had spent a couple of years outside the US	5.39%
				Had spent several years outside the US	5.88%

4.2. Correlations and Cronbach's α of ASE, APE, AME, AMX, and AEE

Be sure that all figures and tables fit within the document's regular margins

Values for Cronbach's α for each scale variable are given in Table 4.2. For each variable besides AEE, α is greater than 0.7, demonstrating strong inter-item correlations.

Table 4. 2: Cronbach's α

	ASE	APE	AME	AMX	AEE
α	0.95	0.81	0.79	0.72	0.60

Correlations between scales can be found in Table 4.3. The correlation matrix for these items suggests that there is a weak correlation between ASE and APE, AME, AMX, and AEE. There are slightly stronger correlations between APE and AME and AMX. Similarly, there is a low correlation between AME and AMX. There are very low correlations between AEE and all forms of American Exceptionalism.

Table 4. 3: Correlation Calculations

	ASE	APE	AME	AMX	AEE
ASE	1.000				
APE	0.4472	1.0000			
AME	0.5619	0.6655	1.0000		
AMX	0.3797	0.5106	0.4377	1.0000	
AEE	0.2559	0.3421	0.3312	0.3965	1.0000

These results suggest at least some level of distinction between respondents' attitudes toward these concepts, thus affirmatively answering the guiding research question.

4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Goodness-of-Fit Measures

The results of CFA 1 indicated that the model was not a good fit. I assessed this

model using Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). According to Schreiber et al., (2006 p. 330), CFI should be at least 0.95 and the RMSEA should be less than 0.06. The goodness-of-fit for CFA 1 was well below desirability: 0.66. Similarly, the RMSEA was unacceptable: 0.15. This result indicates that there is not a single underlying latent construct explaining these 24 variables. Though we still need to determine whether the alternative four-factor model I suggested is a good fit for these variables, the above goodness-of-fit results demonstrate that a single-factor model is not the correct model.

The results of my Confirmatory Factor Analysis of a model with four latent variables – ASE, APE, AME, and AMX – had a CFI of 0.93 and RMSEA of 0.07. This shows the model as a reasonable fit and superior to CFA 1. The results of the likelihood ratio test further indicated that there was greater explanatory power in the CFA with four latent variables than the CFA with a single latent variable. The desired p-value for the results of the likelihood ratio test will be below 0.05 if it is indeed the case that a four-factor model explains the data better than a single factor model. The p-value from the likelihood ratio test was below 0.0005, indicating that the four-factor model is a better fit than the one-factor model. See table 4.4 for a summary of these results. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 demonstrate the factor loadings and error terms of CFA 1 and CFA 2 respectively. Figure 4.2 also shows the correlations between the latent variables used in the model. See Appendices C-F for further tables and charts of CFA 1 and CFA2.

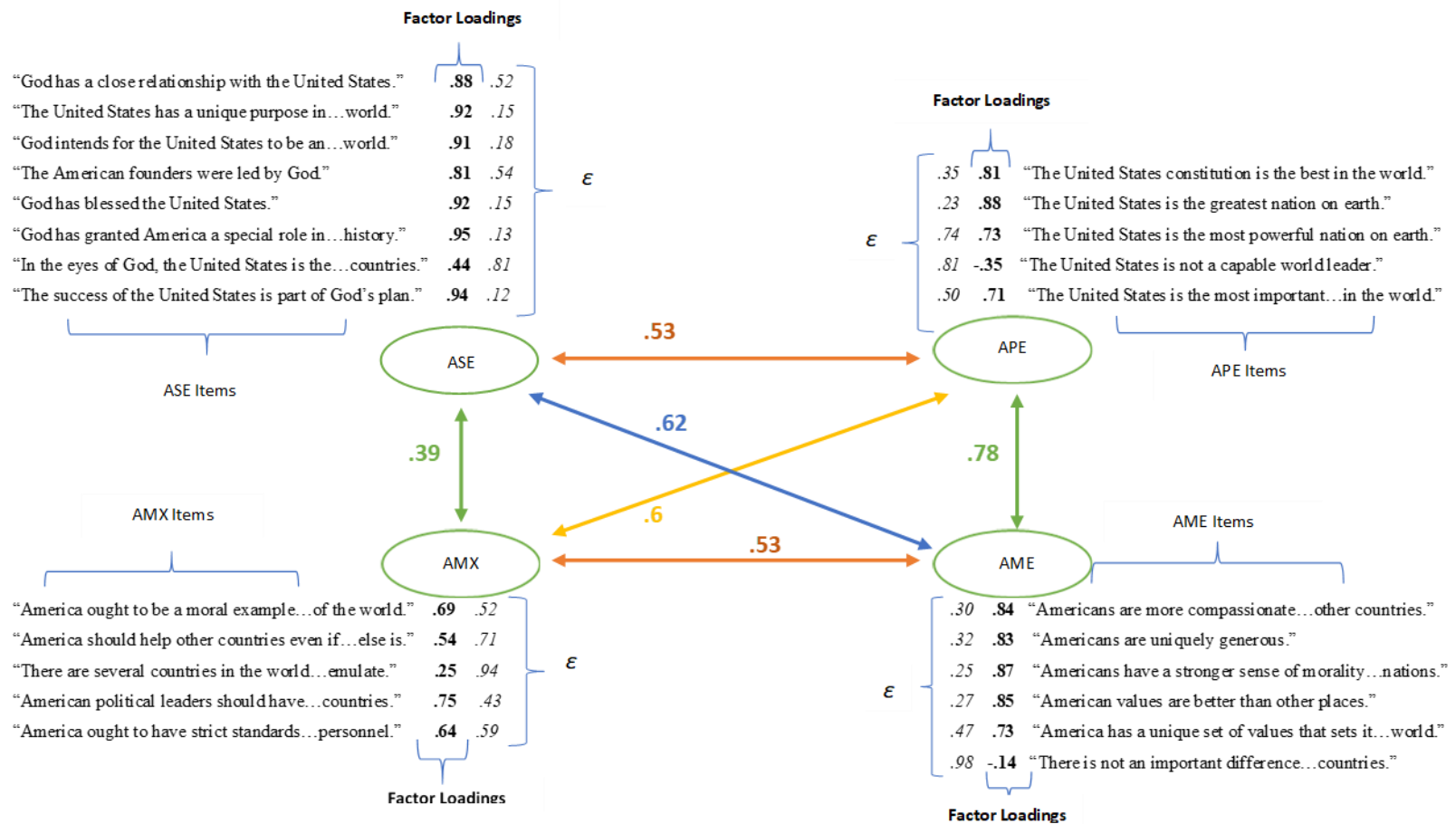
Table 4. 4: Comparative CFA Illustration

	Confirmatory Factor Analysis 1	Confirmatory Factor Analysis 2
Obs:	294	294
CFI:	0.66	0.93
RMSEA:	0.15	0.07
LR Test:	0.000	

Figure 4. 1: Factor Loadings and Error Terms of CFA 1



Figure 4. 2: Illustration of CFA 2 Model



4.4. Improvements to the Model

Calculations determining ways to improve a CFA model, known as modification indices, can be conducted to improve model fit. These calculations suggest new pathways that can be introduced into the model. It is important when consulting modification indices to only adopt changes to the model that can be theoretically justified. Modification indices of CFA 2 indicated several theoretically justified intra-model paths that could be added to improve the model fit. I added one path between observed variables associated with different latent variables and two paths between variables associated with the same latent variable. I also moved one variable from the construct AMX and put it with the construct of AME.

The observed variable “The American founders were led by God”, associated with the latent variable ASE, was highly correlated with the observed variable “The United States constitution is the best in the world”, associated with the latent variable APE. ($MI = 7.1$; see Table 4.5). This correlation was theoretically plausible. If one believes the creators or the U.S. Constitution were divinely inspired, it stands to reason that they would believe the U.S. Constitution was superior to all other, “merely human” constitutional constructions. Conversely, if one believes the U.S. Constitution is superior to others, it is plausible one will come to believe its creators were divinely inspired. Thus, I added a path between these two variables.

Within the construct of AME, the observed variables “Americans are more compassionate than people in other countries” and “Americans are uniquely generous” were highly correlated ($MI = 22.5$) and the observed variables “American values are better

than other places” and “America has a unique set of values that sets it apart from the world” were highly correlated ($MI = 17.2$). Both correlations make theoretical sense. Compassion and generosity are highly related virtues that are seldom, if ever, possessed in isolation to each other. Similarly, having values that are “better” than other places entails having values that are unique from other places (though the reverse is not true). As such, I added a path between each of these two sets of variables.

Finally, the variable “America ought to be a moral example for the rest of the world” was strongly related to the construct AME ($MI = 70.5$). As such, I moved this variable from the construct AMX to the construct AME.

In addition to these modifications, I dropped the following observed variables due to their low factor loadings: “In the eyes of God, the United States is the same as all other countries” (ASE); “The United States is not a capable world leader” (APE); “There is not an important difference between the morals of Americans and people from other countries” (AME). The correlation strength of the observed ASE variable “The American founders were led by God”, and the observed APE variable “The United States constitution is the best in the world” was .18. The correlation strength between the observed AME variables “Americans are more compassionate than people in other countries” and “Americans are uniquely generous” and “American values are better than other places” and “America has a unique set of values that sets it apart from the world” was .29 and .22 respectively. The factor loading onto AME for the observed AMX variable “America ought to be a moral example for the rest of the world” was .60. See Table 4.6

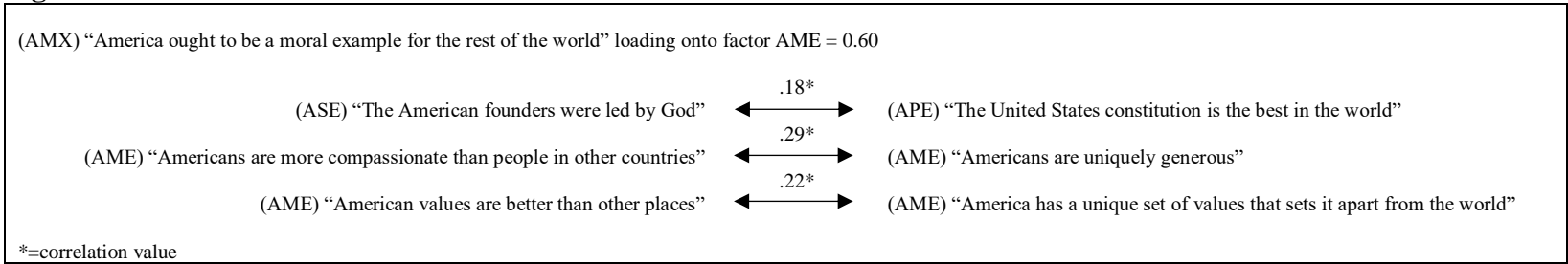
for a summary of these results. The resulting model showed moderately improved goodness-of-fit: RMSEA = 0.07; CFI = 0.95.

Figure 4. 3: Modification Indices

	MI	df	P>MI	EPC	Standard EPC
"America ought to be a moral example for the rest of the world."	70.5	1	0.00	.7494774	.5748062
cov("The American founders were led by God", "The United States constitution is the best in the world")	(AME) 7.1	1	0.01	.1129214	.1766334
cov("Americans are more compassionate than people in other countries", "Americans are uniquely generous")	22.5	1	0.00	.1762341	.3635907
cov("American values are better than other places", "America has a unique set of values that sets it apart from the world")	17.2	1	0.00	.1663949	.2975006

Cov = covariation

Figure 4. 4: CFA 3



5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Discussion

American Exceptionalism is a pervasive and contentious concept in both domestic and international spheres. Given the prevalence of the notion of American Exceptionalism and its power to influence domestic and international action, it is important that we understand its nature and what is being asserted or denied when it is invoked. While much scholarship has been devoted to understanding American Exceptionalism, such work has tended to ignore the fundamental structure of the concept and relied on imprecise definitions. For example, Jason Gilmore and Charles Rowling define American Exceptionalism as the “belief that the United States is a singular, superior, and even God-favored country in the international community” (2017, p. 139). This definition is problematic in that it does not convey in what ways the United States is viewed as singular or superior.

Alternatively, Deborah L. Madsen states the concept of American exceptionalism as the following: “Americans are...exceptional, because they are charged with saving the world from itself and, at the same time...must sustain a high level of spiritual, political and moral commitment to this exceptional destiny” (1998, p.2). Here Madsen draws out the elements of exceptionalism commonly assumed when the notion of American Exceptionalism is invoked: spirituality, performance, and moral excellence.

Ronald Reagan claimed that the earliest European inhabitants of America “established a spiritual foundation that has served us ever since” (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-

c). The belief he expressed was not a novel political gambit, but a long-standing tradition within the United States. Growing out of this notion of America as spiritually exceptional were beliefs that America was exceptional in what it had achieved as a nation. For example, Franklin D. Roosevelt stated in his first inauguration speech that the American “constitutional system has proved itself the most superbly enduring political mechanism the modern world has produced” (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-g). In a similar vein, Hillary Clinton defended her belief in American Exceptionalism with a quip that America is “that longest surviving democracy” (CBS Sunday Morning, 2014).

Also growing out of the belief that America was spiritually exceptional was the view that America was morally exceptional. John Winthrop, quoting Jesus Christ, declared the settlers of Massachusetts Bay to be a shining city on a hill, on display for all the world to see how a Christian community and government ought to behave. Notions of American Moral Exceptionalism have been identified in two veins (Litke, 2012). First, there is descriptive claims of America’s moral exceptionalism. These are notions that the American people are morally superior to other people; that American values are better than the values of other places. Second, there are notions of America as called to be moral exemplar to the world. With these claims, the point of emphasis is not on the values that are possessed by Americans, but on the values that should be possessed by Americans and the reasons these values should be possessed by Americans: as an example to the world.

Madsen was quite right in connecting America’s political and moral condition to an antecedent spiritual condition. What Madsen and others fail to acknowledge is the logical independence of these notions of American Exceptionalism. While spiritual

exceptional beliefs can and have been used to justify moral and performative exceptionalism beliefs, one need not hold spiritual beliefs to maintain beliefs that America is performatively exceptional or morally exceptional.

Attempts to measure belief in American Exceptionalism have been restricted without a clear grasp of the subtleties of the concept. This study has endeavored to draw together appropriate survey items meant to measure belief in all aspects of American Exceptionalism. It has supplemented this list with original items in order to contribute to the development of an extensive scale for measuring belief in American Exceptionalism. I developed a 24-item scale based on these distinctions within the concept of American Exceptionalism. The results from this study show that the dominant model of American Exceptionalism, which views a single, latent construct as explanatory of all invocations of exceptionalism attributed to the United States, is quantitatively unsupported.

Here I have suggested the following definition: American Exceptionalism is a metamyth purporting that the United States is comparatively unique in the international community or comparatively superior in the international community or favored by God or a higher power, composed of myths of American Performative Exceptionalism, American Spiritual Exceptionalism, American Moral Exceptionalism, and American Moral Exemplarism. Following Goidel et al. (2015, p. 71), by stating that American Exceptionalism is a “metamyth,” I mean to say that the United States possesses a category of myths about its own exceptionalism. These myths can be further categorized into myths of America’s spiritual condition, prowess or achievements, and moral condition.

The results from my Confirmatory Factor Analysis suggest that a model with four latent constructs as explanatory of the notion of American Exceptionalism is quantitatively superior to a model with a single latent construct. Further, the results of this study indicate, by the correlation statistics, that the identified American Exceptionalism myths are believed in isolation to each other. This means that one may believe the United States is unique in its moral outlook or capabilities without buying into moral or performative myths of the United States. Alternatively, one may believe that the United States has an exceptional governmental structure or moral character but disbelieve that the United States has a unique connection to a higher power. Again, American Exceptionalism scholars have too often swept all invocation of American Exceptionalism together and not considered the distinctive claims that are being presented concerning the United States.

In closing, what ought we to expect to become of the notion of American Exceptionalism? In 2020 the Republican Party will put forward a new platform. It remains to be seen whether, under the leadership of President Donald Trump, the party will remain unequivocal supporters of American Exceptionalism. Equally uncertain is whether the Democrats will take up the torch of American Exceptionalism if it is laid down by the Republicans.

The ardent Democratic defender of American Exceptionalism, Hillary Clinton, is arguably no longer a major political actor. If the Democrats are to be “the new party of American Exceptionalism” (Klain, 2016), another voice within the party must take up this rhetoric. The gentler, more acceptable brand of American Exceptionalism posited by President Barack Obama may be appealing to American liberals, but whether President

Obama continues to advocate for this form of American Exceptionalism or whether he is successful in convincing his fellow Democrats to accept it remains to be seen.

Even if American Exceptionalism continues to be espoused by one or more political parties in the United States, it faces several challenges. One challenge faced by the myth of American Exceptionalism is the growing secularization of America. Despite the various branches that have sprouted since the landing of the pilgrims, the root of American Exceptionalism is a deeply religious myth. Future invocations of American Exceptionalism will likely reflect the secularization of society over this religious history. Exceptionalism myths meant to unify and motivate citizens will emphasize moral behavior and outward achievement, not spirituality.

However, this adaptation of the concept of American Exceptionalism faces challenges as well. Social and political myths are beneficial in providing citizens a unifying story. Myths of American Exceptionalism are no different. However, contemporary America must reconcile its story with the descendants of African slaves, Native Americans, and other oppressed groups. America as a place especially set apart by God to uphold liberty and justice was consistent with Ronald Reagan's assertion that America had been blessed for its faithfulness (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-c), but also with Abraham Lincoln's portrayal of America as being punished by God for the injustice of slavery (Peters & Woolley, n.d.-f). Without God, America's history is less of a narrative of a divine calling that we have sometimes failed to live up to and more of a mere spotty record. The challenge moving forward is to develop an exceptionalism story that unifies citizens under the banner of "American" while acknowledging our blemished history.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research

Limitations

My sample was overwhelmingly young (mean age = 38; mode age = 28), white (77%), well-educated and well-traveled (less than 12% had never attended college courses and greater than 66% had been outside of the U.S.), non-religious (approximately 10% atheist, 15% agnostic, 16% non-religious) and liberal (approximately 44% of respondents identified as strongly or moderately liberal). These findings are consistent with other studies on the demographics of MTurk workers. Further, such findings do not undermine the legitimacy of exploratory work on MTurk (Cf. Clifford, Jewell & Waggoner, 2015).

Due to the high volume of non-religious respondents who disagreed with all questions that assumed the existence of God, the reverse coding in the block of questions meant to gauge American Spiritual Exceptionalism was ineffectual. In a cross tabulation of the reverse coded item in my ASE question block with my variable for religious orientation, 25 self-identified atheists strongly disagreed with the statement that “in the eyes of God, the United States is the same as all other countries” and only 4 reported being “neutral” (the most fitting response) and 2 strongly agreed (properly responding to the question as it is worded in comparison to the other questions in this block). In responding to the question of whether God has a close relationship with the United States, 29 self-identified atheists strongly disagreed and only 1 was neutral. This indicates that several non-religious respondents strongly disagreed with all statements that assumed the existence of God, making the reverse coding in this block of questions ineffectual.

Respondents to this survey were self-selected, taken from the population of Amazon Mechanical Turk workers. As such, this sample was not randomly selected and is not representative. This is acceptable as this study did not seek to determine an accurate representation of views on American Exceptionalism. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a variety of measures of American Exceptionalism reflect a single underlying construct or multiple underlying constructs.

Future Research

More research is needed to develop a model of American Exceptionalism. This model ought to have multiple latent variables representing notions of exceptionalism. The number of latent variables needed to properly represent the notion of American Exceptionalism and the specific content of these variables remains to be discovered.

Further research is also needed in the following areas:

1. How strongly do Americans hold to beliefs in American Exceptionalism? Do they believe in the various forms discussed in this paper with equal strength or do they tend to believe one type more or less than the others?
2. What is the relationship between age and belief in American Exceptionalism? Is there evidence that younger generations of Americans are less prone to believe in American Exceptionalism when controlling for relevant variables such as political ideology and religious orientation?
3. What is the relationship between education and belief in American Exceptionalism? Is there evidence that education is positively or negatively correlated to belief in American Exceptionalism?
4. What is the relationship between foreign experience and belief in American Exceptionalism? Is there evidence that foreign experience is positively or negatively correlated to American Exceptionalism?

5. What is the relationship between political ideology and belief in American Exceptionalism? Is there evidence that conservatives or liberals are stronger adherents to American Exceptionalism? Are there differences between the types of American Exceptionalism that liberal and conservatives believe in?
6. What is the relationship between religious orientation and belief in American Exceptionalism? Are non-religious individuals, when controlling for relevant factors such as political ideology, age, education and foreign experience, still compelled by American Moral Exceptionalism or American Performative Exceptionalism? Do the religious of America tend to be adherents of American Spiritual Exceptionalism?

Further research is needed to answer these questions. However, the results of this study have provided several insights that will help research to more accurately acquire these answers. Refined conceptions and measures will allow for a clearer grasp on belief in American Exceptionalism. It will allow researcher to measure distinctions between exceptionalism views held by Democrats and Republicans as well as proving researchers more precise measurements for determining how American Exceptionalism affects and is affected by political attitudes and behaviors.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE AND CODEBOOK

Place text or figures/tables here. *Questionnaire*

Section 1: Background Information

1. Please enter your worker ID: _____
2. In what year were you born? (Please indicate using numeric values, e.g. 1994) _____
3. Which of the following do you identify as?
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Other
4. Which of the following do you identify as?
 - ☐ White/Caucasian
 - ☐ Black/African American
 - ☐ Hispanic/Latino/na
 - ☐ Asian
 - ☐ Native American
 - ☐ Other _____
5. Which of the following best describes you?
 - ☐ I am a citizen of the United States by birth
 - ☐ I am a naturalized citizen of the United States
 - ☐ I am a permanent resident of the United States
 - ☐ I am a temporary resident of the United States
 - ☐ None of these
6. Have you ever traveled or lived outside of the United States?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

7. If you answered yes to the previous question, how much time have you spent traveling or living outside of the United States? (Choose the MOST correct answer from the drop down menu below)
- ☐ Less than 1 week
 - ☐ A couple of weeks
 - ☐ About a month
 - ☐ A couple of months
 - ☐ Between 2 and 6 months
 - ☐ About 6 months
 - ☐ Between 6 months and a year
 - ☐ About a year
 - ☐ A couple of years
 - ☐ Several years
8. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?
- ☐ Less than High School Diploma or equivalent
 - ☐ High School Diploma or equivalent
 - ☐ Some College
 - ☐ Undergraduate Degree
 - ☐ Graduate Degree
9. Politically, which of the following do you identify most as?
- ☐ Strongly liberal
 - ☐ Moderately liberal
 - ☐ Moderate
 - ☐ Moderately conservative
 - ☐ Strongly conservative
10. Who did you vote for in the 2016 presidential election?
- ☐ Donald Trump
 - ☐ Hillary Clinton
 - ☐ Another Candidate
 - ☐ I did not vote
11. Generally speaking, do you think the United States is generally going in the right direction, or do you think the country has gotten on the wrong track?
- ☐ Right track
 - ☐ Wrong track
 - ☐ I don't know

12. Are you currently registered to vote?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

13. Would you say you are financially better off than you were a year ago or are you worse off?

- ☐ Better off
- ☐ Worse off
- ☐ Same
- ☐ I don't know

14. Do you think the national economy is getting better or worse?

- ☐ Better
- ☐ Worse
- ☐ Same
- ☐ I don't know

15. In your opinion, does hell exist?

- ☐ Absolutely not
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Probably
- ☐ Absolutely
- ☐ I don't know

16. Which of the following best describes your religious orientation? (Choose the MOST accurate answer from the drop down menu below)

- ☐ Evangelical Protestant or Born Again
- ☐ Mainline Protestant
- ☐ Historically Black Protestant
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Orthodox Christian
- ☐ Mormon
- ☐ Jehovah Witness
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Atheist
- ☐ Agnostic

- ☐ Non-Religious
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ Other

(All following questions were on a Likert scale between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree))

Section 2: Personal Faith

1. My religious faith is extremely important to me.
2. I pray daily.
3. I look to my faith as a source of inspiration.
4. I look to my faith as providing meaning and purpose in my life.
5. I consider myself active in my faith or church.
6. My faith is an important part of who I am as a person.
7. My relationship with God is extremely important to me.
8. I enjoy being around others who share my faith.
9. I look to my faith as a source of comfort.
10. My faith impacts many of my decisions.

Section 3: Personal Beliefs about the United States

1. God has a close relationship with the United States of America.
2. The United States has a unique purpose in God's plan for the world.
3. God intends for the United States to be an example to the rest of the world.
4. The American founders were led by God.
5. God has blessed the United States.
6. God has granted America a special role in human history.
7. In the eyes of God, the United States is the same as all other countries.
8. The success of the United States is part of God's plan.
9. The United States constitution is the best in the world.
10. The United States is the greatest nation on earth.
11. The United States is the most powerful nation on earth.
12. The United States is not a capable world leader.

13. The United States is the most important country in the world.
14. Americans are more compassionate than people in other countries.
15. Americans are uniquely generous.
16. Americans have a stronger sense of morality than most other nations.
17. American values are better than other places.
18. America has a unique set of values that sets it apart from the world.
19. There is not an important difference between the morals of Americans and people from other countries.
20. America ought to be a moral example to other nations.
21. America should help other countries, even if no one else is.
22. There are several countries in the world whose values America ought to emulate.
23. American political leaders should have higher moral standards than the leaders of other countries.
24. America ought to have strict standards of conduct for military personnel serving overseas even if other nations do not have the same standards for their military personnel.
25. America does things differently than the rest of the world.
26. The United States is uniquely different from every other country on Earth.
27. The United States has a unique history compared to the rest of the world.
28. The culture of the United States is unique compared to the rest of the world, but not in a way that makes it better or worse.
29. There is not an important difference between American culture and many other places, but not in a way that makes it better or worse.

Codebook

Variable Name	Label	Coding
timestamp	Time survey was completed.	N/A
WorkID	"Please enter your worker ID"	Recorded as short answer; coded verbatim
age	"In what year were you born? (Please indicate	Recorded as short

	using numeric values, e.g. 1994)”	answer; coded verbatim
gender	“Which of the following do you identify as?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Female ▪ Male ▪ Other _____
race	“Which of the following do you identify as?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ White/Caucasian ▪ Black/African American ▪ Hispanic/Latino/na ▪ Asian ▪ Native American ▪ Other _____
citizen	“Which of the following best describes you?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I am a citizen of the United States by birth ▪ I am a naturalized citizen of the United States ▪ I am a permanent resident of the United States ▪ I am a temporary resident of the United States ▪ None of these
travel1	“Have you ever traveled outside the United States?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
travel1_num	travel1 variable coded numerically	<p>0 = No</p> <p>1 = Yes</p>
travel2	“If you answered yes to the previous question, how much time have you spent traveling or living outside of the United States? (Choose the MOST correct answer from the drop down menu below)”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than 1 week ▪ A couple of weeks ▪ About a month ▪ A couple of months ▪ Between 2 and 6 months ▪ About 6 months ▪ Between 6 months and a year ▪ About a year ▪ A couple of years ▪ Several years
travel2_num	travel2 variable coded numerically	<p>1 = Less than 1 week</p> <p>2 = A couple of weeks</p> <p>3 = About a month</p>

		<p>4 = A couple of months</p> <p>5 = Between 2 and 6 months</p> <p>6 = About 6 months</p> <p>7 = Between 6 months and a year</p> <p>8 = About a year</p> <p>9 = A couple of years</p> <p>10 = Several years</p>
educ	“What is the highest level of education you have obtained?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than High School Diploma or equivalent ▪ High School Diploma or equivalent ▪ Some College ▪ Undergraduate Degree ▪ Graduate Degree
educ_num	educ variable coded numerically	<p>1 = Less than High School Diploma or equivalent</p> <p>2 = High School Diploma or equivalent</p> <p>3 = Some College</p> <p>4 = Undergraduate Degree</p> <p>5 = Graduate Degree</p>
ideo	“Politically, which of the following do you identify most as?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strongly Conservative ▪ Moderately Conservative

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderate ▪ Moderately Liberal ▪ Strongly Liberal
ideo_num	ideo variable coded numerically	1 = Strongly Liberal 2 = Moderately Liberal 3 = Moderate 4 = Moderately Conservative 5 = Strongly Conservative
vote	“Who did you vote for in the 2016 presidential election?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Donald Trump ▪ Hillary Clinton ▪ Another Candidate ▪ I did not vote
track	“Generally speaking, do you think the United States is generally going in the right direction, or do you think the country has gotten on the wrong track?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Right track ▪ Wrong track ▪ Not sure
regis	“Are you currently registered to vote?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No ▪ Not sure
perfin	“Would you say you are financially better off than you were a year ago or are you worse off?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better off ▪ Worse off ▪ Same ▪ I don’t know
natfin	“Do you think the national economy is getting better or worse?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better ▪ Worse ▪ Same ▪ I don’t know
hell	“In your opinion, does hell exist?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Absolutely not ▪ Probably not ▪ Probably ▪ Absolutely ▪ I don’t know
religion	“Which of the following best describes your religious orientation? (Choose the MOST accurate answer from the drop down menu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evangelical Protestant or Born Again ▪ Mainline Protestant

	below)”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Historically Black Protestant ▪ Catholic ▪ Orthodox Christian ▪ Mormon ▪ Jehovah Witness ▪ Jewish ▪ Muslim ▪ Buddhist ▪ Hindu ▪ Atheist ▪ Agnostic ▪ Non-Religious ▪ Don’t Know ▪ Other
SRF1	“My religious faith is extremely important to me.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
SRF2	“I pray daily.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
SRF3	“I look to my faith as a source of inspiration.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
SRF4	“I look to my faith as providing meaning and purpose in my life.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
SRF5	“I consider myself active in my faith or church.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
SRF6	“My faith is an important part of who I am as a person.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
SRF7	“My relationship with God is extremely important to me.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
SRF8	“I enjoy being around others who share my faith.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
SRF9	“I look to my faith as a source of comfort.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5

		(strongly agree)
SRF10	“My faith impacts many of my decisions.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
faith	Combination of SRF1-SRF10	10 (low faith) - 50 (high faith)
ASE_relation	“God has a close relationship with the United States.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
ASE_purpose	“The United States has a unique purpose in God’s plan for the world.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
ASE_example	“God intends for the United States to be an example to the rest of the world.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
ASE_founders	“The American founders were led by God.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
ASE_blessed	“God has blessed the United States.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
ASE_role	“God has granted America a special role in human history.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
ASE_eyes	“In the eyes of God, the United States is the same as all other countries.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
ASE_eyes_rev	ASE_eyes variable reverse coded	
ASE_success	“The success of the United States is part of God’s plan.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
APE_constitution	“The United States constitution is the best in the world.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
APE_greatest	“The United States is the greatest nation on earth.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)

APE_powerful	“The United States is the most powerful nation on earth.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
APE_capable	“The United States is not a capable world leader.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
APE_capable_rev	APE_capable variable reverse coded	
APE_important	“The United States is the most important country in the world.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AME_compassion	“Americans are more compassionate than people in other countries.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AME_generous	“Americans are uniquely generous.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AME_strongermorals	“Americans have a stronger sense of morality than most other nations.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AME_bettervalues	“American values are better than other places.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AME_uniquevalues	“America has a unique set of values that sets it apart from the world.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AME_difference	“There is not an important difference between the morals of Americans and people from other countries.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AME_difference_rev	AME_difference reverse coded	
AMX_moralexample	“America ought to be a moral example for the rest of the world.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AMX_help	“America should help other countries even if no one else is.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AMX_emulate	“There are several countries in the world whose	1 (strongly disagree) - 5

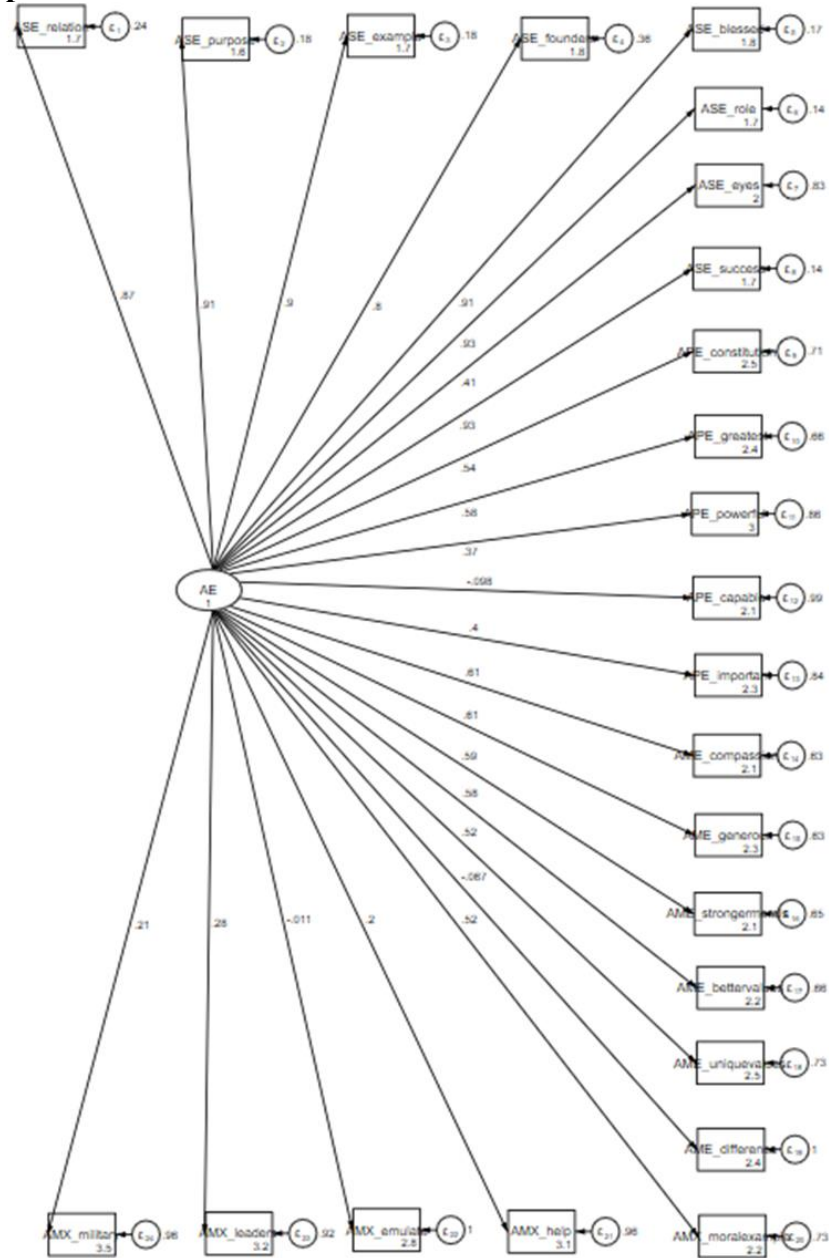
	values America ought to emulate.”	(strongly agree)
AMX_emulate_rev	AMX_emulate reverse coded	
AMX_leaders	“American political leaders should have higher moral standards than the leaders of other countries.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AMX_military	“America ought to have strict standards of conduct for military personnel serving overseas even if other nations do not have the same standards for their military personnel.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AEE_difference	“America does things differently than the rest of the world.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AEE_unique	“The United States is uniquely different from every other country on Earth.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AEE_history	“The United States has a unique history compared to the rest of the world, but not in a way that makes it better than any other place in the world.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AEE_culture	“The culture of the United States is unique compared to the rest of the world, but not in a way that makes it better or worse.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AEE_importdif	“There is not an important difference between American culture and many other places.”	1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)
AEE_importdif_rev	AEE_importdif reverse coded	
ASE	Combination of all ASE variables	8-40
APE	Combination of all APE variables	5-25
AME	Combination of all AME variables	5-25

AMX	Combination of all AMX variables	5-25
AEE	Combination of all AEE variables	5-25
polweight	Weight variable for political ideology	N/A
source	Differentiates between original and secondary data	0 = secondary data 1 = original data
missing	Missing data	N/A

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

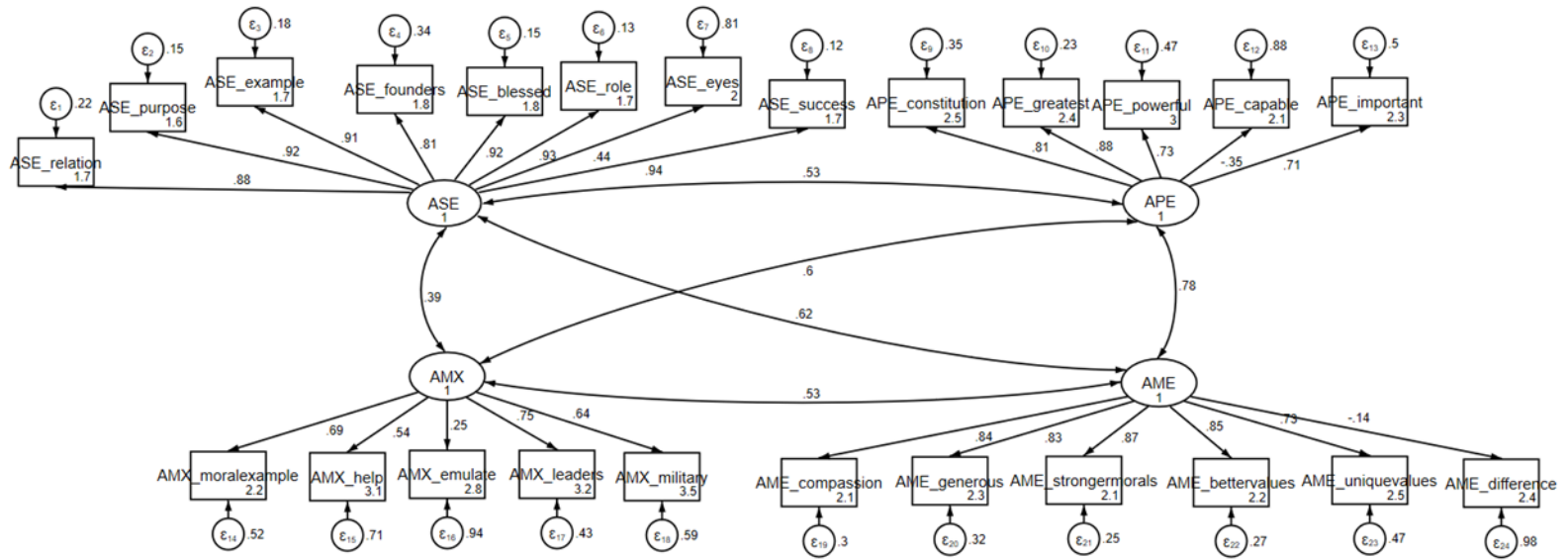
Appendix B. 1: Illustration for CFA 1



Appendix B. 2: Table for CFA 1

Variable	Label	Loading	Mean	Error	Variable	Label	Loading	Mean	Error
ASE_relation	"God has a close relationship with the United States."	0.87	1.7	0.24	APE_important	"The United States is the most important country in the world."	0.40	2.3	0.84
ASE_purpose	"The United States has a unique purpose in God's plan for the world."	0.91	1.6	0.18	AME_compassion	"Americans are more compassionate than people in other countries."	0.61	2.1	0.63
ASE_example	"God intends for the United States to be an example to the rest of the world."	0.90	1.7	0.18	AME_generous	"Americans are uniquely generous."	0.61	2.3	0.63
ASE_founders	"The American founders were led by God."	0.80	1.8	0.38	AME_stronger	"Americans have a stronger sense of morality than most other nations."	0.50	2.1	0.65
ASE_blessed	"God has blessed the United States."	0.91	1.8	0.17	AME_better	"American values are better than other places."	0.58	2.2	0.66
ASE_role	"God has granted America a special role in human history."	0.95	1.7	0.14	AME_unique	"America has a unique set of values that sets it apart from the world."	0.52	2.5	0.73
ASE_eyes	"In the eyes of God, the United States is the same as all other countries."	0.41	2	0.83	AME_difference	"There is not an important difference between the morals of Americans and people from other countries."	-0.07	2.4	1.0
ASE_success	"The success of the United States is part of God's plan."	0.93	1.7	0.14	AMX_moral	"America ought to be a moral example for the rest of the world."	0.52	2.2	0.73
APE_constitution	"The United States constitution is the best in the world."	0.54	2.5	0.71	AMX_help	"America should help other countries even if no one else is."	0.20	3.1	0.96
APE_greatest	"The United States is the greatest nation on earth."	0.58	2.4	0.66	AMX_emulate	"There are several countries in the world whose values America ought to emulate."	-0.01	2.8	1.0
APE_powerful	"The United States is the most powerful nation on earth."	0.57	3.0	0.86	AMX_leaders	"American political leaders should have higher moral standards than the leaders of other countries."	0.28	3.2	0.92
APE_capable	"The United States is not a capable world leader."	0.008	2.1	0.99	AMX_military	"America ought to have strict standards of conduct for military personnel serving overseas even if other nations do not have the same standards for their military personnel."	0.21	3.5	0.96

Appendix B. 3: Illustration for CFA 2



Appendix B. 4: Table for CFA 2

LV			FL	μ	ϵ	LV			FL	μ	E
A S E	ASE_relation	"God has a close relationship with the United States."	.88	1.7	.52	A M E	AME_compassion	"Americans are more compassionate than people in other countries."	.84	2.1	.30
	ASE_purpose	"The United States has a unique purpose in God's plan for the world."	.92	1.6	.15		AME_generous	"Americans are uniquely generous."	.83	2.3	.32
	ASE_example	"God intends for the United States to be an example to the rest of the world."	.91	1.7	.18		AME_strongermorals	"Americans have a stronger sense of morality than most other nations."	.87	2.1	.25
	ASE_founders	"The American founders were led by God."	.81	1.8	.54		AME_bettervalues	"American values are better than other places."	.85	2.2	.27
	ASE_blessed	"God has blessed the United States."	.92	1.8	.15		AME_uniquevalues	"America has a unique set of values that sets it apart from the world."	.73	2.5	.47
	ASE_role	"God has granted America a special role in human history."	.95	1.7	.13		AME_difference	"There is not an important difference between the morals of Americans and people from other countries."	-.14	2.4	.98
	ASE_eyes	"In the eyes of God, the United States is the same as all other countries."	.44	2.0	.81	A M X	AMX_moralexample	"America ought to be a moral example for the rest of the world."	.69	2.2	.52
	ASE_success	"The success of the United States is part of God's plan."	.94	1.7	.12		AMX_help	"America should help other countries even if no one else is."	.54	3.1	.71
A P E	APE_constitution	"The United States constitution is the best in the world."	.81	2.5	.35		AMX_emulate	"There are several countries in the world whose values America ought to emulate."	.25	2.8	.94
	APE_greatest	"The United States is the greatest nation on earth."	.88	2.4	.23		AMX_leaders	"American political leaders should have higher moral standards than the leaders of other countries."	.75	3.2	.43
	APE_powerful	"The United States is the most powerful nation on earth."	.73	3.0	.74		AMX_military	"America ought to have strict standards of conduct for military personnel serving overseas even if other nations do not have the same standards for their military personnel."	.64	3.5	.59
	APE_capable	"The United States is not a capable world leader."	-.35	2.1	.88	LVs ASE- ASE- ASE- APE- APE- AME- APE- AME- AMX- AME- AMX- AMX- .53 .62 .39 .78 .60 .53					
	APE_important	"The United States is the most important country in the world."	.71	2.3	.50						